

Motorcycle champion Sanders vows to continue Dakar rally despite injury

RIYADH: Reigning motorcycle champion Daniel Sanders vowed to battle on in the Dakar Rally on Wednesday despite suffering a suspected broken collarbone on stage 10 in the Saudi Arabian desert.

The Australian KTM rider crashed over a dune after 138km of the 371km stage from the overnight bivouac to Bisha and dropped from the lead to fourth overall, with American Ricky Brabec taking over at the top on a Honda.

“It looks like for sure a snapped collarbone... We’ve let the rally go now. We’ll go back to the team and re-evaluate the injuries and the situation and see if its safe to continue I guess,” said Sanders.

“I want to continue, I wouldn’t finish today if I didn’t want to continue... I’ve just done 150k in the sand dunes, it’s all rocks now so I can just stand up and cruise along.

“On the gravel roads its a little bit easier, but we’ll see. We don’t quit. Mum and dad didn’t raise no quitter, so I’m not pulling out now. Until someone else tells me to pull out, or they drag me out of the race, I’m not stopping.”



JJ-SPORT’S Benyang Xu and Lei Tian, Ford Racing’s Mattias Ekstrom and Emil Bergkvist in action during the Dakar Rally on Wednesday.—Reuters

Honda’s Adrien Van Beveren won the stage ahead of Brabec, who was credited with a minute and 37 seconds for assisting Sanders and assumed the overall lead.

The American leads Argentina’s KTM rider Luciano Benavides by 56 seconds with Spaniard Tosha Schareina third for Honda but 15 minutes and 43 seconds off the pace.

In the car category, Qatar’s Nasser Al-Attiyah returned to the top for Dacia and opened up a 12 minute gap on Toyota’s South African Henk Lategan and a further 50 seconds on Ford’s previous leader Nani Roma.

“It was very tough,” said Al-Attiyah. “My head and body have taken a real beating. But we really attacked from start to finish.”

Lategan had described on Tuesday as a bit of a disaster and it continued on stage 10 where he made a navigational mistake and ran out of fuel.

“I don’t know what to say any more. Everything that could go wrong has gone wrong in this race,” he said. “We lost power steering yesterday, ran out of fuel today and got lost twice missing waypoints. This isn’t how you win the Dakar.”

France’s nine-times world rally champion Sebastian Loeb was fourth overall, 23 minutes behind teammate Al-Attiyah.

Mathieu Serradori won the stage for the Century Racing team, with Al-Attiyah second and Loeb third.

The race, which ends on Saturday on the Red Sea coast, is also the first round of the World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC) season.—Reuters



RAJKOT: New Zealand batters Daryl Mitchell (R) and Will Young run between the wickets during the second One-day International against India at the Niranjan Shah Stadium on Wednesday.—AFP

Mitchell ton helps NZ level ODI series against India

RAJKOT: Daryl Mitchell scored an unbeaten 131 from 117 balls to lead New Zealand to a seven-wicket win over India in the second One-Day International on Wednesday and level the three-match series at 1-1.

New Zealand won the toss and sent India into bat, restricting the hosts to 284/7 in Rajkot. The visitors chased down that target with 15 deliveries remaining to set up a series decider.

Mitchell, who has been in fine form in ODI cricket and scored 761 runs in 2025 at an average of 54.35, came in with New Zealand in a difficult position at 46-2.

The 34-year-old quickly built a strong partnership with Will Young as the pair combined for 162 runs, with Mitchell being dropped on 80 by Prasidh Krishna before going on to notch his eighth ODI century.

“We haven’t won here for a couple of years. Nice to get a win. I am just enjoying doing the job for the country,” Mitchell said. “Young is a class player, I love batting with him, we also have fun batting together. He

Scoreboard	
INDIA:	
R. Sharma c Young b Clarke.....	24
S. Gill c Mitchell b Jamieson.....	56
V. Kohli b Clarke.....	23
S. Iyer c Bracewell b Clarke.....	8
K. L. Rahul not out.....	112
R. Jadeja c&b Bracewell.....	27
N. K. Reddy c Phillips b Foulkes.....	20
H. Rana c Bracewell b Lennox.....	2
M. Siraj not out.....	2
EXTRAS (LB-2, NB-1, W-7).....	10
TOTAL (for 7 wickets, 50 overs).....	284
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-70 (Sharma), 2-99 (Gill), 3-115 (Iyer), 4-118 (Kohli), 5-191 (Jadeja), 6-248 (Reddy), 7-256 (Rana)	
DID NOT BAT: K. Yadav, P. Krishna	
BOWLING: Jamieson 10-2-70-1 (1w), Foulkes 9-0-67-1 (2w), Clarke 8-0-56-3 (2w, 1nb), Lennox 10-0-42-1 (2w), Bracewell 10-1-34-1, Phillips 3-0-13-0	
NEW ZEALAND:	
D. Conway b Rana.....	16
H. Nicholls b Krishna.....	10
W. Young c Reddy b Yadav.....	87
D. Mitchell not out.....	131
G. Phillips not out.....	32
EXTRAS (LB-5, W-5).....	10
TOTAL (for 3 wickets, 47.3 overs).....	286
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-22 (Conway), 2-46 (Nicholls), 3-208 (Young)	
DID NOT BAT: M. Hay, M. Bracewell, Z. Foulkes, K. Clarke, K. Jamieson, J. Lennox	
BOWLING: Siraj 9-0-41-0 (2w), Rana 9-3-1-52-1 (1w), Krishna 9-0-49-1, Reddy 2-0-13-0, Jadeja 8-0-44-0 (1w), Yadav 10-0-82-1	
RESULT: New Zealand won by seven wickets.	
PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH: Daryl Mitchell	

enjoyed playing the spinners and using all his options.”

Indian bowlers enjoyed early success when Harshit Rana bowled Devon Conway, who made 16, and fellow quick Krishna had Henry Nicholls inside-edge a delivery onto his stumps for 10.

After that Young was joined at the crease by experienced Mitchell and the pair steadied the innings for the Black Caps.

Young (87) came close to scoring a century before he top-edged a Kuldeep Yadav delivery and sent the ball looping into Nitish Kumar Reddy’s hands, ending the partnership.

It was too little too late from India, however, as Mitchell and Glenn Phillips (32) took New Zealand over the finish line and helped them complete their highest-ever ODI run chase in India.

“It is a complete performance from us and proud of the team. We were very happy at the halfway point. We bowled very well. We were ready to chase anything, really,” New Zealand captain Michael Bracewell said.

Earlier on Wednesday, Kristian Clarke took three decisive wickets to stall India’s top-order, sending Rohit Sharma, Shreyas Iyer and Virat Kohli back to the dressing room.

KL Rahul was the cornerstone of India’s innings as he struck an unbeaten 112 from 92 balls.

He put together a 73-run stand with Ravindra Jadeja (27) and added another 57 with Reddy (20) as he scored his eighth century and also recorded his joint-highest score in the 50-over format.

“We did get a decent start with the ball, but they batted very well in the middle overs,” India captain Shubman Gill said.

“In the first 10-15 overs that we bowled, the ball was doing well. After that the wicket settled. But we could have been more brave, and taken more chances.”

The decisive third match of the series will be played in Indore, before the teams wrap up their preparations for next month’s Twenty20 World Cup with a five-match T20I series.—Agencies

Pakistan women’s white-ball squads for SA tour named

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Wednesday announced the ODI and T20 squads of the national Women’s team for their upcoming tour to South Africa starting next month.

Fatima Sana will continue to lead the side in both the formats as Pakistan look to develop a strong side for this year’s ICC Women’s T20 World Cup, starting in June.

Aliya Riaz, Ayesha Zafar, Gull Feroza, Muneeba Ali, Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Parvaiz, Rameen Shamim, Sadia Iqbal, Sidra Amin, and Tasmia Rubab are part of both the squads, while uncapped batter Saira Jabeen and right-arm fast bowler Humna Bilal have earned their maiden T20 International call-ups.

Openers Ayesha and Gull along with left-arm pacer Tasmia and wicket-keeper/batter Najiha Alvi have been called up to the 15-member ODI squad after missing out on the World Cup selection.

Diana Baig, Najiha, Sadaf Shamas and Syeda Aroob Shah are part of the 50-over squad only while Humna, Saira, Tuba Hassan and Eyman Fatima are in the T20 squad.

The women team’s tour to South Africa starts with the T20 on Feb 10 in Potchefstroom.

During the tour, team mentor Wahab Riaz will be assisted by Imran Farhat (batting coach), Umaid Asif (fast bowling coach), Abdur Rehman (spin bowling coach) and Abdul Majeed (fielding coach).

A pre-series training camp will commence from Sunday at the Hanif Mohammad High Performance Centre in Karachi.

T20 squad: Fatima Sana (captain), Aliya Riaz, Ayesha Zafar, Eyman Fatima, Gull Feroza (wicket-keeper), Humna Bilal, Muneeba Ali (wicket-keeper), Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Parvaiz, Rameen Shamim, Sadia Iqbal, Saira Jabeen, Sidra Amin, Tasmia Rubab, Tuba Hassan

ODI squad: Fatima Sana (captain), Aliya Riaz, Ayesha Zafar, Diana Baig, Gull Feroza, Muneeba Ali (wicket-keeper), Najiha Alvi (wicket-keeper), Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Parvaiz, Rameen Shamim, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Sidra Amin, Syeda Aroob Shah, Tasmia Rubab.—Sports Reporter



NONTHABURI (Thailand): Players in action during the SAFF Futsal Championship match between Pakistan and the Maldives at the Nonthaburi Stadium on Wednesday. Pakistan lost the match 7-1. The national side take on Bhutan in their second game on Friday.—Courtesy SAFF

Pakistan to host Australia in three T20Is at Gaddafi Stadium

By Our Sports Reporter

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has selected Gaddafi Stadium as the venue for the three-match T20 International series against Australia, scheduled to be played from Jan 29 to Feb 1, as part of preparations for next month’s T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka.

The PCB confirmed the schedule in a press release issued on Wednesday, stating that the three matches will be played on Jan 29, 31 and Feb 1, with the toss set for 5.30pm (PST) and the first ball to be bowled at 6:00pm on each day.

Australia’s T20I squad will arrive in Lahore on Jan 28.

The series is expected to provide crucial match practice to both teams ahead of the T20 showpiece, where Pakistan are placed in Group ‘A’ and Australia in Group ‘B’.

However, Lahore’s current cold and foggy weather may not be ideal for night cricket. The absence of covered enclosures at the Gaddafi Stadium could also make conditions uncomfortable for spectators.

This will be Australia’s third tour of Pakistan since their return in March-April 2022, when they played a three-match Test and ODI series followed by a lone T20I. The visitors also played three matches of the 2025 Champions Trophy in Pakistan.

Australia won the only T20I played at the Gaddafi Stadium in April 2022 by three wickets.

Currently, Australia are ranked second in the ICC T20I rankings, while Pakistan are placed seventh. The series will therefore provide an important opportunity for Pakistan to assess their strength ahead of the World Cup.

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Hazlewood ‘on track’ to start T20 World Cup

MELBOURNE: Australia fast bowler Josh Hazlewood expects to be ready for the start of the Twenty20 World Cup next month after sitting out their Ashes series victory against England through injuries, the 36-year-old said.

The right-arm quick missed Australia’s 4-1 Ashes victory with a hamstring strain. He subsequently suffered Achilles soreness in his rehabilitation, but was confident he would be ready for Australia’s tournament opener against Ireland in Colombo on February 11.

“Everything’s going to plan,” Hazlewood told the ESPN Cricinfo website. “We took a few extra weeks once we couldn’t make the Test matches. I had a couple of bowls off the half-run last week. Running’s going well, all the strength stuff’s going well so, yeah, on track.”

Hazlewood’s availability from the start will be a big boost for Australia, who are fretting over the composition of their pace attack.

Australia have named Pat Cummins in the World Cup squad but are considering delaying his return from a lumbar stress injury that prompted the team to rest the quick after his single Ashes appearance in Adelaide.

With their Ashes hero Mitchell Starc retiring from T20 internationals, Xavier Bartlett is set to claim the second pace bowling slot in the group stage of the World Cup.

After the World Cup, Hazlewood will be in action in the Indian Premier League. Later this year, Australia will enter an 11-month stretch during which they will play up to 21 Tests.

Hazlewood said it was too early to plan his Test workload.

“(With) white ball, you can really sit down and nut it out because you know you’re involved for four or 10 overs pretty much,” he said.

“With the red ball, it is a bit more on the run. You can map out the way you want to train to get ready for that first one, but I think once the Tests start then it’s sort of play it by ear and have those conversations on the go.”—Reuters

LA28 organisers promise ‘affordable’ tickets

LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles 2028 Olympics chiefs promised an “affordable and inclusive” Games on Tuesday as they prepared to open registration for a lottery to buy tickets.

LA28 chairman Casey Wasserman said one million tickets to the Olympics and Paralympics would be priced at \$28 while a third of the roughly 14 million tickets due to go on sale would cost \$100 or less.

“From the beginning, we’ve been clear: access to these games, because these games belong to everyone,” Wasserman said. “These games have to be affordable and inclusive.”

Wasserman was speaking in the shadow of the historic Los Angeles Coliseum on the eve of the first step towards tickets going on sale.

On Wednesday at 7:00 am local time (1500 GMT), fans around the world will be able to register for the chance to secure an opportunity to buy tickets starting in April.

Fans registering will be entered into a draw that will randomly assign time slots to buy tickets for the games.

Wasserman’s comments on Tuesday follow weeks of criticism of world football’s governing body FIFA’s ticketing strategy for this year’s World Cup in the US, Canada

and Mexico.

FIFA was forced to announce a limited number of tickets priced at \$60 last month after ticket prices for the tournament were condemned as “extortionate and astronomical”.

“This is the first step for fans around the city, around the country and yes around the world, to get their ticket to history and join us here in LA for the greatest games the world will have ever seen,” Wasserman said.

“The foundation of everything we’re building tomorrow is about fans, the people who bring the energy, the enthusiasm and the

noise.”

Tuesday’s ceremony gathered around 300 Olympians and Paralympians from past Games as officials conducted a ceremonial lighting of the Olympic cauldron at the Los Angeles Coliseum.

“Our tickets are going to be affordable, our games will be accessible, and they’re right here in our backyard,” LA28 chief executive Reynold Hoover said at the event.

Hoover added that organisers had already seen more than 150,000 people sign up to be volunteers at the Games.

“That’s nearly 150,000 supporters saying ‘I want to be a part of this, I want to be a part of history,’” he said.

US swimming legend Janet Evans, a four-time Olympic gold medalist and LA28’s chief athlete officer, cited her own experience of going to the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics as a fan.

“The Olympics and Paralympics bring the world together but they inspire people,” Evans told AFP.

“As a 12-year-old that came to watch the games here in ‘84, I was inspired to do what I do now. I think that making tickets accessible and affordable for everyone here in the city of Los Angeles is going to inspire young people...because that’s what the Olympics do -- they inspire people.”—AFP

‘Recent wins enabled Pakistan to prepare well for U-19 World Cup’

HARARE: Recent victories and vigorous preparations of late have helped Pakistan get themselves ready for the forthcoming ICC Men’s U-19 World Cup, captain Farhan Yousuf said on Wednesday.

Talking to PCB Digital, Farhan said that recent contests had enabled his team to prepare for the all-important event being held in Namibia and Zimbabwe from Jan 15 to Feb 6.

“The U-19 camp in Multan helped us perform well in the Asia Cup and the [Zimbabwe] tri-series. The same support staff has been work-

ing with us for the last six months and it is now paying dividends ahead of the World Cup,” the skipper said.

“We have prepared well for the mega event. The players share a strong bond as we have been together for the last six months.

“The tri-series and the warm-up against the US helped us understand the conditions here and we are now all set to do well in the World Cup,” he added.

Pakistan open their U-19 World Cup campaign on Friday when they take on England at the Takashinga

Sports Club in Harare.

Pakistan, who recently won the ACC U-19 Asia Cup in Dubai beating India and the tri-series crown in Zimbabwe, will look to carry their winning momentum in the global event.

The Green-shirts, the winners of the 2004 and 2006 editions of the U-19 World Cup, will be looking to grab their third title.

Placed in Group ‘C’ of the 16-team spectacle, Pakistan in their second group fixture face Scotland on Jan 19 at the Takashinga Sports Club, before taking on hosts Zimbabwe at

the same venue in their final group match on Jan 22.

The Super Six stage of the event will be played in Bulawayo and Harare from Jan 24 to Feb 1, with the top four sides advancing to the semi-finals scheduled for Feb 3 and 4. The final will be staged at the Harare Sports Club.

The Pakistan team played two warm-ups to fine-tune their preparations for the mega event. The first warm-up against Bangladesh on Saturday was washed out at the Masvingo Sports Club while in the second warm-up Pakistan defeated

the US by 69 runs at the Bulawayo Athletic Club on Tuesday.

Among the 15-member squad, only Ali Raza featured in the 2024 edition of the U-19 World Cup. The right-arm quick nine wickets in the event, where Pakistan narrowly lost to Australia in the semi-final by one wicket.

Pakistan squad: Farhan Yousuf (captain), Usman Khan (vice-captain), Abdul Subhan, Ahmed Hussain, Ali Hasan Baloch, Ali Raza, Daniyal Ali Khan, Hamza Zahoor (wicket-keeper), Huzaifa Ahsan, Momin Qamar, Mohammad

Sayyam, Mohammad Shayan (wicket-keeper), Nigab Shafiq, Sameer Minhas, Umar Zaib

Non-travelling reserves: Abdul Qadir, Farhanullah, Hassan Khan, Ibtisam Azhar, Mohammad Huzaifa Support staff: Sarfaraz Ahmed (manager/mentor), Shahid Anwar (head coach/batting coach), Rao Iftikhar (bowling coach), Mansoor Amjad (fielding coach), Abrar Ahmed (trainer), Syed Nazir Ahmed (media manager), Dr Ali Aun (doctor), Ubaidullah (physio), Ali Hamza (analyst).—Agencies